



HALEY BARBOUR
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MISSISSIPPI
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

CONTACT: Dan Turner (601) 576-2009; dturner@governor.state.ms.us
Laura Hipp (601) 576-2020; lhipp@governor.state.ms.us

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Handy Hardware to Build Distribution Facility in Meridian

Jackson, Mississippi - Governor Haley Barbour announced today that Handy Hardware, a dealer-owned hardware buying group, will open a distribution center in Meridian employing more than 150 people.

Handy will break ground on the distribution facility in the Meridian I-20/59 Industrial Park by mid-2009. The company will invest between \$15 million and \$20 million in the facility.

"We are delighted Handy Hardware has decided to locate its new distribution center in Mississippi. We welcome this investment in the Lauderdale County area and the jobs this facility is expected to create," Governor Haley Barbour said.

Based in Houston, Texas, Handy currently operates from a 560,000-square-foot distribution center. Although the company has not yet finalized its building plans, the new Meridian center is expected to be comparable to the Houston site.

U.S. Sen. Thad Cochran, U.S. Sen. Roger Wicker, and U.S. Rep. Gregg Harper praised the east-central Mississippi project, which arrives during austere economic times.

"Handy Hardware's decision to locate in Meridian will lead to another multi-million dollar investment in Mississippi," Sen. Wicker said. "That is great news for our state's economy, especially during these tough economic times."

Sen. Cochran said, "I am pleased that Handy Hardware has recognized the quality of the workforce in Mississippi and decided to open a new distribution center here. Mississippians should be proud that even in tough economic times, businesses continue to invest in our state."

"Lauderdale County is a wonderful place to raise a family, and Mississippi is excited about the growth this facility will bring to the community," said Third District U.S. Rep. Harper, whose district includes Meridian.



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"It is wonderful to be able to announce the location of a new distribution facility in Mississippi during these trying economic times. Handy Hardware's expansion into Mississippi further confirms the state's value as a key location for distribution," said MDA executive director Gray Swoope. "We are pleased to have worked with the outstanding individuals at Handy on this project, and we appreciate the efforts of our economic development partners in Meridian and Lauderdale County who worked to bring this facility to the area."

Handy Hardware is one of only five dealer-owned hardware buying groups in the country, and the cooperative currently serves more than 1,100 members in Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Tennessee and Texas, in addition to retailers in Mexico and Central America.

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